

(FBCM) on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of its sanctuary.

First Baptist Church of Merrifield was started in a log cabin between 1871–1872. FBCM had then branched out and began worshipping on property owned by Mr. Robert Bradley of Merrifield. In 1891, the property was purchased from him by church Trustees: John E. Coates, Joshua Ball, and Joshua Pearson for the sum of five dollars. And quickly, FBCM was a church formed from strong community family ties.

First Baptist Church of Merrifield was unable to adequately celebrate their 150th “Sesquicentennial” Homecoming Anniversary in 2020 due to the challenges of COVID–19. This year’s celebration is significant as the spirit of last year is incorporated with the excitement of reaching 151 years. First Baptist Church of Merrifield remains a vital part of the community today partnering with their neighbors both before and during COVID–19. They hosted the Greater Merrifield Business Association Annual Fall Festival in 2018, and virtual Sunday Services and Bible Studies continued to be held each week. They also organized First Baptist Church of Merrifield Community Festivals held in 2018 and 2019, that included free food giveaways, gift card give-away, seminars on anxiety and grief, free tutoring, and mentorship sessions with local schools within the community (Luther Jackson Middle School, Timber Lane Elementary School, Annandale High School) as well as other outreach efforts.

In 151 years, there have been 13 pastors and 2 interim pastors. Each one contributing to the growth of FBCM in their own way. A few of those contributions include: the establishment of the Golden Ages Senior Saints Ministry, the Merrifield Child Development Center, the Recovery of the Historic Bell, creation of a youth mentoring program with Luther Jackson Middle School, tutoring outreach with Luther Jackson Middle School, Timber Lane Elementary School, and Annandale High School, and much more. FBCM truly leads by both faith and example in our community.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending First Baptist Church of Merrifield for its efforts to better the Northern Virginia region and in congratulating them on the occasion of this anniversary. It is a privilege to work alongside this great congregation in the community, and I wish them continued success through faith, family, and service.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MERCED COLLEGE’S LOS BANOS CAMPUS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 5, 2021

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Merced College’s Los Banos Campus on its 50th anniversary. This phenomenal educational institution has been providing the students of Los Banos and the Central Valley with a high-quality educational institution for 50 years.

In 1971, Merced College President Lowell Barker alongside founding Dean Ted McVey decided to begin providing full-time education services to student in a rented facility. From there, the campus eventually moved to a plot

of 10 acres of land donated by resident Richard Menezes in 1982.

They began the process of setting up their new permanent campus after a land donation from Larry and Georgeann Anderson in 2002. Finally, in 2007, the current Los Banos Campus opened its doors for its students, and has continued to provide a wide range of courses to assist students in their path towards a degree or transfer.

The Los Banos Campus also provides a great selection of career technical education courses that, in as little as six months, can prepare students to enter directly into the workforce. In addition to this, the campus continues to expand its use and implementation of various technological resources for its students to ensure they are set up for success.

For the students of Los Banos, this educational institution serves a vital role in providing robust opportunities, while ensuring that these individuals can have access to these experiences right in their own hometown, thus reducing significant barriers to their success.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Merced College’s Los Banos Campus on its 50th anniversary. Its service and contributions to the State of California and the San Joaquin Valley will always be celebrated.

RECOGNIZING THE RECIPIENTS OF THE GLOBAL ORGANIZATION OF PEOPLE OF INDIAN ORIGIN AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 5, 2021

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) and to congratulate the recipients of its Annual Awards of Excellence. Founded in 1989, the mission of GOPIO is battling human rights violations committed against persons of Indian origin. Today, while that mission continues, GOPIO has also broadened its mission to include bringing together persons of Indian origin for the benefit of not only themselves and their Indian homeland, but also the communities in which they currently reside.

Indian-Americans have made countless contributions to the United States in the fields of business, education, medicine, science, technology, and public service while preserving and sharing their culture in a manner that promotes tolerance and mutual understanding.

Many of our awardees have been at the forefront of those efforts. It is my honor to include in the RECORD the names of the following individuals:

Dr. V.K. Raju—Medicine
Dr. Vikram Raya—Entrepreneurship
Dr. Korok Ray—Innovation & Research
Dr. Ram Gupta—Education
Professor Indrajit S. Saluja—Journalism
Nilima Mehra—Media Journalism
Vinita Tiwari—Arts & Culture Poet, Singer & Dancer
Janetha R. Kancharla—Philanthropy & Advocacy

Northern Virginia, which I am proud to represent in Congress, is blessed by its diversity. We are home to more than 40,000 people of

Indian descent as well as Indian-American owned small businesses. This diversity enriches our entire community and contributes to our region being considered one of the best places in the country in which to live, work, raise a family, and start a business.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating all of the recipients of the GOPIO Awards of Excellence on their accomplishments. I commend them for their service to their communities and to our Nation, and I wish them success in all their future endeavors.

PROTECT VOTING RIGHTS

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 5, 2021

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, I thank Speaker PELOSI, Leader HOYER, Whip CLYBURN, Chairman NADLER, and all my distinguished colleagues for their work to ensure the House passed legislation to protect voting rights. It is time for the Senate to do the same.

We have seen an uptick in voter suppression efforts across our nation to undercut the representation of communities of color, specifically African Americans. With historic levels of voter turnout in recent elections, our Republican colleagues have interpreted this increased participation in civic life as a threat and campaigned to disenfranchise Black voters under the guise of protecting against “voter fraud.”

Sadly, voter suppression efforts are not new to African American communities. I remember growing up in El Paso, Texas when the poll tax was still being collected. We have endured decades of abuse by political parties and election officials seeking to deny us our constitutional right to vote. Therefore, it is urgent that the Senate pass The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. This critical legislation would restore Section 5 and Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits racially discriminatory changes to the voting process and restrictions to the right to vote.

Lastly, I’d just like to say that the world is watching us. As Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and having served as an election observer in other countries, I know the importance of a free and fair election and how it strengthens a democracy. Across the country we are witnessing a coordinated assault on the integrity of our electoral process. We need to live up to our own ideals to stand as an example for other countries to follow.

The Senate must pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. It will strengthen our democracy and give us the tools to fight voter suppression.

RECOGNIZING THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 10TH ANNUAL ARTSFAIRFAX AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 5, 2021

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize ArtsFairfax and the recipients of the